

To: StClair, Christie[StClair.Christie@epa.gov]
Cc: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: Ethan Barton
Sent: Tue 3/29/2016 5:06:15 PM
Subject: Re: Superfund questions

Great, thank you.

On Tue, Mar 29, 2016 at 1:05 PM, StClair, Christie <StClair.Christie@epa.gov> wrote:

Yes, got them - program is working on a response.

Christie

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 29, 2016, at 12:51 PM, Ethan Barton <ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org> wrote:

Christie,
Just wanted to be sure you got these follow-ups.

Thanks,

Ethan

On Mon, Mar 28, 2016 at 1:36 PM, Ethan Barton
<ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org> wrote:

Christie,
I noted the mistake in Q4 and will make sure it's corrected in my copy.

As for the Gold King Mine responses, these were requested several weeks ago. I'll discuss with Michael Bastasch, who co-wrote the articles, and my editor.

Additionally, on superfund:

1. On question 1, SEMS and CERCLIS, essentially, if I want complete data, I should look at the CERCLIS database, but note that it is only updated through November 2013. Is that correct?

2. On question 2, I want to be clearing that I'm asking about the "frozen" CERCLIS files, rather than the SEMS report, for several reasons, including the fact that, as you mentioned, SEMS is incomplete and relies on CERCLIS.

So, to be clear, anything in the second tab of this

page <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-data-and-reports> titled "CERCLIS Reports & Data Files" are sites that still have work remaining, even though many of the sites listed have been removed from the NPL. Is that correct?

Meanwhile, anything under the third tab, titled "Archived Site Reports & Data Files" are completed, cleaned, and removed from the NPL, though they can be unarchived if necessary. Is that correct?

3. If that's the case, why are there sites in the "Active" database that have been removed from the NPL? Why aren't those "archived"?

Some additional new questions regarding Superfund data:

4. Regarding the NPL, what is the difference between "deleted," "removed," and "withdrawn"?

5. In CERCLIS, are the financial transactions in actual dollars? Ie, if a financial transaction (FT_AMT field in the FIN_TRA table) shows "5000", does that mean \$5,000?

6. In CERCLIS, how can I determine what type of RFTT_Code in FT_AMT denote how much was actually spent in a transaction? Not "obligated" or "committed," but how many dollars a site spent in regards to any given transaction date.

I'm on deadline for these by 5 pm tomorrow, but receiving answers piecemeal would be preferred, since the answers will aid me in querying the database. Additionally, as I've mentioned in the past, speaking with a data person, even off the record, would be ideal, since they are fluent with the database, would likely allow for a quicker question-response, and would be able to immediately clear up any uncertainties I have, since CERCLIS clearly isn't designed for public use or understanding.

Thanks,

Ethan

On Fri, Mar 25, 2016 at 1:49 PM, StClair, Christie <StClair.Christie@epa.gov> wrote:

Ethan,

We made a mistake in the answer to Q4. The Milltown site is in Montana, not Wyoming.

Christie

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 24, 2016, at 11:41 AM, Ethan Barton
<ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org> wrote:

Thanks.

On Thu, Mar 24, 2016 at 11:39 AM, StClair, Christie
<StClair.Christie@epa.gov> wrote:

They're working on it and hope to send it today.

Christie St. Clair

Office of Public Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

Washington, DC

o: [202-564-2880](tel:202-564-2880)

m: [202-768-5780](tel:202-768-5780)

From: Ethan Barton [<mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org>]

Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2016 11:36 AM

To: StClair, Christie <StClair.Christie@epa.gov>

Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Subject: Re: Superfund questions

Got it, thank you.

On Thu, Mar 24, 2016 at 11:35 AM, StClair, Christie
<StClair.Christie@epa.gov> wrote:

I heard from the Superfund program that they are just doing a final fact check on their response, Ethan.

I'll ask them now where things stand.

Christie St. Clair

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From: Ethan Barton
[mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2016 11:33 AM

To: StClair, Christie <StClair.Christie@epa.gov>
Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Superfund questions

Christie,

Have you heard back from the superfund folks? Knowing more about this database would greatly help me and would ensure accuracy, completeness, and fairness in forthcoming articles. But if I need to write without that help, we'll start publishing stories and denote the uncertainties as a result of EPA's unresponsiveness.

If it's any help, I'd happily speak with a data person over the phone completely off the record with the intent of just learning more about the database.

I can't give you a hard deadline for when my first article on this will be published, but I expect to start breaking stories next week, when I'll also want comment on my findings.

Thanks,

Ethan

On Wed, Mar 23, 2016 at 11:01 AM, Ethan Barton
<ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org> wrote:

Any updates, Christie? Those first two questions about the databases are especially crucial. And as I've begun querying the "Active" CERCLIS database, I already know I'll have additional questions about it.

On Mon, Mar 21, 2016 at 2:58 PM, Ethan Barton
<ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org> wrote:

Great, thank you.

On Mon, Mar 21, 2016 at 2:56 PM, StClair, Christie
<StClair.Christie@epa.gov> wrote:

Hi Ethan, checking with them now.

Christie

Christie St. Clair

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From: Ethan Barton
[mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2016 2:50 PM

To: StClair, Christie
<StClair.Christie@epa.gov>
Cc: Grantham, Nancy
<Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Superfund questions

Christie,

Any updates on these, especially the questions about the databases?

Thanks,

Ethan

On Wed, Mar 16, 2016 at 3:57 PM, Ethan Barton
<ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org>
wrote:

Great, thanks Christie.

On Wed, Mar 16, 2016 at 3:56 PM, StClair, Christie
<StClair.Christie@epa.gov> wrote:

No worries, Ethan, but the program office will appreciate your saying that, I'll share it with them.

I've not heard from them so assuming they are swamped and will turn to this tomorrow or Friday.

Christie

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 16, 2016, at 3:30 PM, Ethan Barton
<ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org>

wrote:

Sorry to keep sending emails piecemeal like this. Learning superfund feels much like learning a new language, and I'm trying to gain hold on the various terminology.

Just to clarify my second question regarding the data files, does "archived" only refer to sites that were proposed or considered for the NPL, or were they at one time listed on the NPL and later removed?

Similar, do the "active" data files include sites that are both under evaluation for NPL consideration, as well as those currently on the NPL?

Thanks,

Ethan

On Tue, Mar 15, 2016 at 5:20 PM, Ethan Barton
<ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org>
wrote:

Great, thanks. The first two questions are definitely priority. I can wait until early next week

for the remainder of the questions, but those first two are crucial to make sure I'm querying the correct data and querying it accurately.

On Tuesday, March 15,
2016, StClair, Christie
<StClair.Christie@epa.gov>
wrote:

Nope, got those! Just misunderstood what you still need.

I'm submitting the q's below right now. However, I need to let you know that the Superfund/NPL team is incredibly busy right now. These guys are great, and very responsive, but it's possible they won't get to all this until early next week.

Is anything here a major priority you'd like them to tackle first?

Christie

1. I'm confused about SEMS. Right now, I'm looking at the CERCLIS data files, which I understand only goes through 2013. So, are the SEMS data files more up to date? Are those files available?

2. Also, could you please explain the difference between the CERLCIS data files and the archived CERCLIS files? Even with the descriptions on the site, I'm not sure I understand the difference.

3. On funding, the years you sent show a small drop in appropriations. It's my understanding that the drop was more significant going back to the 90s. I've read several news articles spanning the last 10 years are so arguing that this funding decline is the major challenge for Superfund's success. Could you please tell me EPA's plan to combat this funding challenge?

4. In the last set of questions, I asked about success stories. Are there any sites that have been particularly challenging? I'm interested in learning about sites that have been extremely difficult to decontaminate, sites that have been listed but are challenging to begin decontamination (i.e., challenges moving beyond the RI/FS phase), and sites that are challenging to get listed, even if they meet the necessary criteria.

5. As you mentioned, the study showed that property values near or within superfund sites increased after a project was completed to above property values before listing. Do you know if there's any data about how property value changes after a listing? I'm interested in learning how a superfund listing may be an investment in such terms – Does

property value decline
once an area is listed,
then quickly increase
higher than pre-listing
after site cleanup has
finished or when
reuse begins?

6. Thank you for
describing the
process. That makes
things very clear for
me and is easy to
understand. However,
I'd like to know the
funding breakdown
for each of these
phases since 1980.
With that, I'd also like
to include overhead
and administrative
costs, include
expenditures on
salaries.

7. Why is Flint,
Michigan not being
proposed as a
superfund site? I
understand the city is
getting funding from
several sources for
remediation/removal,
but I'm curious why it
isn't being listed as a
superfund site.

8. Now that
the Bonita Peak
Mining District in

Colorado is
requesting superfund
listing, does EPA
have an estimate for
how much the project
will cost from start to
finish and any time
frame? What are the
expected results and
how will the site be
used upon
completion?

Christie St. Clair

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From: Ethan Barton
[mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]

Sent: Tuesday,
March 15, 2016 4:46
PM

To: StClair, Christie
<StClair.Christie@epa.gov>

Cc: Grantham, Nancy
<Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Subject: Re:
Superfund questions

Hopefully I found it.
I'm working on
importing it, so I may
find it's not what I'm
looking for after all
after I open it.

Yes, I'm still looking
for that information,
but I also had several
questions below what
I initially asked about
data. I can resend
them if you need.

On Tue, Mar 15, 2016
at 4:43 PM, StClair,
Christie
<StClair.Christie@epa.gov>
wrote:

Glad you
checked in,
Ethan.
Impressed you
were able to find
the data you
were looking for.

Is this the only
thing you need
me to track down
at this point?

I'm still confused
about SEMS.

Right now, I'm looking at the CERCLIS data files, which I understand only goes through 2013. So, are the SEMS data files more up to date? Are those files available?

Also, could you please explain the difference between the CERCLIS data files and the archived CERCLIS files? Even with the descriptions on the site, I'm not sure I understand the difference.

**Christie St.
Clair**

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From: Ethan

Barton

[mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]

Sent: Tuesday,

March 15, 2016

4:11 PM

To: StClair,

Christie

<StClair.Christie@epa.gov>

Cc: Grantham,

Nancy

<Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>

Subject: Re:

Superfund

questions

Christie,

I first wanted to
make sure that
you saw my
follow-up
questions I sent
last night.

Second, I believe
I figured out the
answer to most
of my questions
related to the
databases,
though, I expect
to have questions

as I begin to
query it.

However, I'm
still confused
about SEMS.
Right now, I'm
looking at the
CERCLIS data
files, which I
understand only
goes through
2013. So, are the
SEMS data files
more up to date?
Are those files
available?

Also, could you
please explain
the difference
between the
CERLCIS data
files and the
archived
CERCLIS files?
Even with the
descriptions on
the site, I'm not
sure I understand
the difference.

Thanks,

Ethan

On Mon, Mar
14, 2016 at 5:02
PM, Ethan
Barton
<ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org>
wrote:

Christie,
this was a
big help. I
think I have
a good
understanding
of how the
program
works. It
still seems
pretty
complex, so
I may ask a
few clarity
questions
later on. I
have a few
follow-ups
immediately.
If you could
get back to
me
sometime
this week,
that would
be great.

1. On the
data:

Essentially,
what I'm
looking for
is a list of
all

superfund
sites,
proposed,
final,
deleted,
withdrawn,
etc., since
1980, their
locations,
their current
status, how
much
money was
spent on
them
annually,
the type of
site
(whether it's
removal or
remedial),
and a brief
overview of
any actions
taken.

I saw the
raw files in
the link you
sent me, but
I'm a little
confused
about the
information
you sent
and the link
you
attached in
terms of
how SEMS
and
CERCLIS,
what the
differences

are between
them, other
than that
SEMS is
replacing
CERCLIS,
and what
data would
be missing
from each.

If I need to
download
multiple
databases or
tables for
all the data
I'm looking
for, that's
fine. I just
want to be
very careful
to make
sure I get
the right
ones to
ensure that
there's no
gaps or
redundancies
in the data
or my
queries.

2. On
funding, the
years you
sent show a
small drop
in
appropriations.
It's my

understanding
that the
drop was
more
significant
going back
to the 90s.
I've read
several
news
articles
spanning
the last 10
years are so
arguing that
this funding
decline is
the major
challenge
for
Superfund's
success.
Could you
please tell
me EPA's
plan to
combat this
funding
challenge?

3. In the last
set of
questions, I
asked about
success
stories. Are
there any
sites that
have been
particularly
challenging?
I'm
interested in
learning

about sites
that have
been
extremely
difficult to
decontaminate,
sites that
have been
listed but
are
challenging
to begin
decontamination
(i.e.,
challenges
moving
beyond the
RI/FS
phase), and
sites that
are
challenging
to get listed,
even if they
meet the
necessary
criteria.

4. As you
mentioned,
the study
showed that
property
values near
or within
superfund
sites
increased
after a
project was
completed
to above
property
values

before
listing. Do
you know if
there's any
data about
how
property
value
changes
after a
listing? I'm
interested in
learning
how a
superfund
listing may
be an
investment
in such
terms –
Does
property
value
decline
once an
area is
listed, then
quickly
increase
higher than
pre-listing
after site
cleanup has
finished or
when reuse
begins?

5. Thank
you for
describing
the process.
That makes
things very
clear for me

and is easy
to
understand.
However,
I'd like to
know the
funding
breakdown
for each of
these phases
since 1980.
With that,
I'd also like
to include
overhead
and
administrative
costs,
include
expenditures
on salaries.

6. Why is
Flint,
Michigan
not being
proposed as
a superfund
site? I
understand
the city is
getting
funding
from
several
sources for
remediation/removal,
but I'm
curious why
it isn't being
listed as a
superfund
site.

7. Now that the Bonita Peak Mining District in Colorado is requesting superfund listing, does EPA have an estimate for how much the project will cost from start to finish and any time frame? What are the expected results and how will the site be used upon completion?

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any clarity on these. Also, please forgive any misused terms and point out my error. I

absolutely
want to
have a firm
understanding
and have no
such
mistakes.

Thanks,

Ethan

--

Ethan Barton

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